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BLOC MILITARY CAPABILITIES

*Mr. Frank
As raised by
their Staff.*

62. The Bloc forces, which hold a great advantage in land power and tactical air power, have the capability of striking at peripheral areas within the period of this estimate. We estimate that the Bloc has the capability to undertake concurrent operations designed to seize and secure continental Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and Southeast Asia. We believe that the Bloc will, within the period of this estimate, possess the capability to conduct these operations simultaneously, but without assurance of sustaining all such operations to the point of decision.

63. The Soviet forces now stationed in Eastern Europe are in an advanced state of readiness for war and can attack with little or no warning. However, the Bloc forces in Eastern Europe would require substantial reinforcements in Soviet ground forces and air forces before they could sustain major offensive operations.

64. The Bloc does not now have, and will be unable, within the period of this estimate, to build or obtain adequate naval forces or sufficient shipping to mount large scale amphibious operations against the Western Hemisphere, or even against the United Kingdom without neutralization of its strategic potential and capture of channel ports. However, it does have the capability to launch short haul amphibious operations in the Baltic and Black Seas, along the northern coast of Norway, in the northern Japan Sea, and to launch limited amphibious operations against Alaska.

65. We believe that the Soviet submarine force has the capability to conduct offensive patrols along most of the strategically vital sea lanes of the world and, possibly, simultaneously to launch guided missile attacks against targets on both the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards of the United States.

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66. We estimate that the Soviet Navy, including its air arm, has the capability to lay extensive mine fields to protect Soviet and Satellite harbors and sea routes, to mine Allied harbors in the Baltic, Black, North and Japan Seas, and to harass sea routes in these areas. It also has the capability to undertake offensive mine warfare against other Allied harbors and sea routes throughout the world.

67. The USSR is capable of undertaking a strategic air offensive against the United States and United Kingdom. We believe the USSR has the capability of inflicting serious damage against the United States by a surprise atomic attack.

68. The Air Defense Capabilities of the Bloc have increased substantially since 1945, and we believe that an air offensive against the principal Soviet centers would encounter vigorous and determined opposition. However, despite the marked improvements in the Bloc air defense system (especially that of the USSR, East Germany, Poland and Manchuria) deficiencies probably will continue to exist during the period of this estimate. These deficiencies will be insufficient, numbers of trained and experienced pilots and operators, modern radar, heavy antiaircraft guns and fighters designed specifically for all weather interception. Within the period of this estimate the Bloc air defense system will probably not be adequate to prevent serious reduction of the Bloc war potential by a determined retaliatory air attack.

69. The Bloc has the capability of rapidly reinforcing with Chinese Communist Forces and Soviet troops the Bloc forces presently in Korea and at the same time of initiating and supporting a major invasion by Soviet forces of the Japanese Islands of Hokkaido and northern Honshu. However, it is improbable that a full scale invasion of Japan could be conducted to the point of decision with the Bloc forces now available in the Far East against the opposition that would be brought to bear against them.

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70. The Soviet Far Eastern submarine fleet could launch attacks against Western shipping in the Pacific. Moreover, the Soviet air forces could make continuing air attacks upon U. S. bases in the Western Pacific and in Alaska. Such attacks would present a serious threat to our operations in the Western Pacific and to our defense of Alaska. However, the USSR does not now have and almost certainly will not have by mid-1953 forces capable of permanently neutralizing U. S. bases in these areas.

71. Chinese Communist and North Korean capabilities in Korea have increased substantially since the beginning of the armistice negotiations, and we believe that they will continue gradually to improve during the period of this estimate. Communist ground forces in Korea are credited with a high offensive potential and are believed capable of launching a major ground attack with little warning.

72. The capabilities of the Communist air force in the Korean area (North Korea, Manchuria, and Northeast China) have improved steadily during the past year. The Communists now possess the capability of launching a major attack with little or no warning. They are capable of seriously challenging the UN air effort in Northwest Korea as far south as the Chongchon River and of expanding their air operations southward into forward UN held territory and adjacent waters.

73. We believe that during the period of this estimate the Communists armed forces will not be able to drive the UN forces from Korea unless major Soviet forces are committed.

74. The Chinese Communists, while maintaining at least their present position in Korea, are capable of undertaking military operations in the Far East* and in Southeast Asia.

* Provided that present U.S. policy with respect to Taiwan remains unchanged and provided that U.S. naval and air forces remain available to defend Taiwan, a Chinese Communist effort to gain control of Taiwan would almost certainly fail.

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a. Hong Kong and Macao. The Chinese Communists will remain capable of launching a successful attack upon Hong Kong and Macao.

b. Southeast Asia.

(1) The Viet Minh will probably be unable to achieve a decisive victory during the period of this estimate without direct commitment of major Chinese Communists forces. We estimate that the Communists have the capability to commit and to support approximately 150,000 Chinese Communists troops in Indochina. A force of this size could probably compel the French and Viet Nam forces to evacuate Tonkin.

(2) The Chinese Communists probably could simultaneously commit approximately 90,000 men for sustained operations in Burma. We believe that this force would be capable of early establishment of Communist control to all north Burma.

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